

and their support for him and the program and principles for which he stood. They did this without urging and with an unshaken faith in his ability and judgment to accomplish his legislative goals. It would not be easy, because such results usually require a free exchange of ideas, suggestions and strategy with the Chief Executive. Yet these legislators had to accept the restricting circumstances, make the best of hurried bedside conferences and move ahead on relayed instructions from an invalid Governor. To make matters more complicated, the Governor's doctors hovered nearby and kept a tight rein over his daily schedule, watching carefully the pressures exerted by legislative problems.

Governor Umstead, as might be expected, met each problem with calm deliberation. To offset the problem of how to communicate with the legislators, he set up a system of conferences with groups of legislators who were brought from the Capitol by car and gathered around his bedside on the second floor of the Executive Mansion. Here the Governor put forth his greatest effort in a forceful presentation of his program and what it meant for North Carolina. Even those who did not agree with some of the legislation in question were greatly impressed with the Governor's grasp and knowledge of the state government problems involved. Despite the handicap of not being able to talk at length with individual legislators, his leadership could not be denied and the 1953 General Assembly began to move ahead after a shaky beginning.

The legislative process is always a stern test for any governor and his leadership. It demands the utmost in skill and ability in dealing with legislators, governmental departments and agencies, various economic groups and organizations, the press and other news media, and of course, the ever-shifting winds of public opinion. It also requires a keen understanding of people, places and events, past and present. As the weeks passed, it became increasingly clear that William Umstead would pass his legislative test with flying colors. Again and again administrative bills came from committees or passed readings on the floor of the House and Senate with the cry of Umstead supporters: "Sail on! Sail on!"

This was a tribute to a frail but determined Governor who would not let illness stand in his way. It was also a sound victory for his friends and legislative leaders. Few people, however, ever